WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A digital document containing a digital signature, wherein the document comprises a piece of software for checking the digital signature.

2.   The digital document of claim 1, wherein the software can be called up using a pointer.

3.   The digital document of claim 1, wherein the digital document has a format for enabling the digital document to be displayed in a web browser.

4.   The digital document of claim 3, wherein the format is at least one of an HTML, XML, or PDF format.

5.   The digital document of claim 1, wherein the software is contained in the digital document.

6.   A method of generating a digital document, the method comprising the steps of:

creating a digital signature for an original document;

generating the digital document from the original document; and

adding the digital signature and a piece of software for checking the digital signature.

7.   A method for checking a digital document containing a digital signature, wherein the document comprises a piece of software for checking the digital signature, the method comprising:

executing the software contained in the document.

8.   The method of claim 6, wherein the original document is selected from the group comprising of digital faxes, letters, agreements, certificates, invoices, orders, order confirmations, and tax assessments.

9.   A computer system comprising a digital document according to any of claims 1 to 5.

10.   A computer system for generating a digital document containing a digital signature, wherein the document comprises software for checking the digital signature, the computer system comprising:

means for storing data;

means for storing programs;

means for executing programs; and

program code means for performing a method of generating a digital document when executed by the means for executing programs, the method comprising:

creating a digital signature for an original document;

generating a digital document from the original document; and

adding to the digital document the digital signature and software for checking the digital signature.

11.   A computer program product comprising program code means for performing a method of generating a digital document when executed on a computer, the method comprising:

creating a digital signature for an original document;

generating a digital document from the original document; and

adding to the digital document the digital signature and software for checking the digital signature.

12.   An electrical carrier signal comprising a computer program product according to claim 11.

13.   A computer program product having program code means for causing a processor of a computer to check a digital document containing a digital signature, the document comprising software for checking the digital signature, the computer program product causing the computer to execute the following step:

executing the software contained in the document.